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GETTY IMAGES

4 THINGS TO KNOW

Trump impeachment effort passes first test in split U.S. Congress

Hearings in the next phase will be public.

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi presides over the U.S. House of Representatives vote on a resolution that sets up the next steps in the impeachment inquiry of U.S. President Donald Trump. REUTERS

A deeply divided U.S. House of Representatives took a major step in the effort to impeach President Donald Trump on Thursday when lawmakers approved rules for the next stage, including public hearings, in the Democratic-led inquiry into Trump's attempt to have Ukraine investigate a domestic political rival.

In the first formal test of support for the impeachment investigation, the Democratic-controlled House voted almost entirely along party lines – 232 to 196 – to move the probe forward in Congress.

The vote demonstrated unity among Democrats who accuse Trump of abusing his office and jeopardizing national security for personal political gain. But they did not pick up a single Republican vote.

"It's a sad day. No one comes to Congress to impeach a president," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said before the vote.

Televised public hearings featuring U.S. officials testifying in Congress about alleged wrongdoing by Trump could crowd out other issues like the economy and immigration as voters turn their minds to the November 2020 presidential election.

That might damage Trump but some of his supporters say the impeachment drive could actually boost his re-election chances by showing him at loggerheads with Washington-based political foes.

Republicans accused Democrats of using impeachment to overturn the results of his 2016 victory.

"The Greatest Witch Hunt In American History!" Trump wrote on Twitter after the vote.

> **"The Greatest Witch Hunt In American History!"**
> **Trump wrote on Twitter after the vote.**

The probe focuses on a July 25 telephone call in which Trump asked his Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymr Zelensky, to investigate Trump's Democratic political rival Joe Biden, a former U.S. vice president, and his son Hunter, who had served as a director for Ukrainian energy company Burisma.

Biden is a leading candidate in the Democratic presidential nomination race to face Trump in the November 2020 election. He and his son have denied any wrongdoing.

Trump has also denied wrongdoing. Republicans have largely stuck by him, blasting the effort as a partisan exercise that has given them little input.

"The country next year will be deciding who our president is going to be. It should not be Nancy Pelosi and a small group of people that she selects that get to determine who is going to be our president," said Kevin McCarthy, the top House Republican.

Just two Democrats – Collin Peterson of Minnesota and Jeff Van Drew of New Jersey – voted against the measure. Both represent districts where Trump won in the 2016 election.

If the House eventually votes to impeach Trump, that would set up a trial in the Republican-controlled Senate. Trump would not be removed from office unless the Senate votes to convict him by a two-thirds margin, something that looks unlikely given Republican reluctance to move against the president. REUTERS

2 Keystone pipeline shut after spilling 9,000 barrels of oil

An estimated 9,120 barrels of oil have spilled from TC Energy Corp's Keystone crude pipeline in North Dakota, state authorities said on Thursday, a major leak at a time of increased regulatory scrutiny of oil pipeline expansions. The cause of the leak has not yet been disclosed. But its size makes it one of the biggest onshore crude spills in the past decade and the largest for Keystone, according to U.S. Pipeline Hazardous Materials and Safety Administration (PHMSA) data back to 2010. Pipeline operator TC Energy has been seeking to expand its pipelines linking Western Canadian oil fields to U.S. refineries with its proposed Keystone XL project. The more-than $6 billion project has faced regulatory and environmental hurdles despite backing by U.S. President Donald Trump. REUTERS

3 Chicago teachers to stay on strike for 11th day

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot said on Thursday that the city's teachers' union had reached a deal to end an 11-day strike and that school would resume for the city's 300,000 public school students on Friday. The Chicago Teachers Union leadership on Wednesday endorsed the proposed contract agreement but insisted its 25,000 members would return to work only if the school calendar were extended to make up for instructional days - and teacher pay - lost during the strike. There was no immediate comment from the teachers' union. Union leaders for Chicago's striking teachers on Wednesday approved a tentative labor deal negotiated with the school district but refused to return to work unless the mayor agreed to make up for instructional days and pay lost during the 11-day walkout. REUTERS

4 Facebook is sued for age, gender bias in finance ads

Facebook Inc was sued on Thursday in a proposed class action accusing it of discriminating against older and female users by withholding advertising for financial services such as bank accounts, insurance, investments and loans. According to the complaint filed in San Francisco federal court, Facebook persists in its willingness to let financial services advertisers "target" prospective customers by age and gender, despite a recent overhaul covering other kinds of ads. It said the Menlo Park, California-based social media company's conduct violates that state's civil rights law, exposing Facebook to billions of dollars in potential damages to users nationwide. REUTERS

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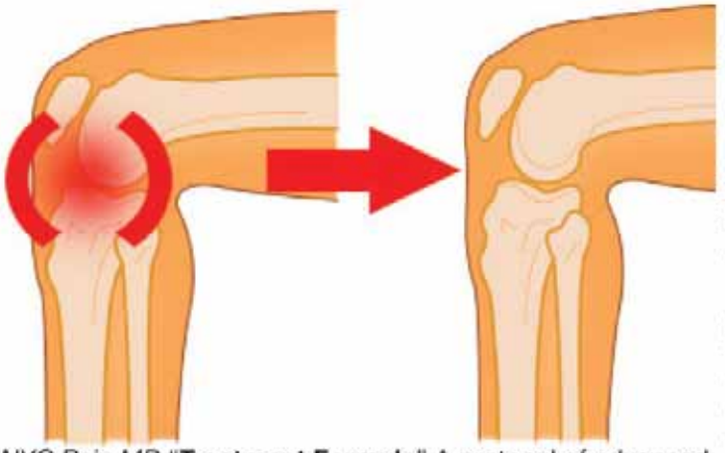

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Viscosupplementation is where a doctor introduces a gel-like medicine directly into the joint space. This helps to lubricate the joints often relieving some, most or even all of your pain. Results can last for 6 months to several years.

Many have had these treatments *without* good results. However, *NYC Pain MD* feels this is because doctors often do these "gel injections" without advanced imaging to guide them. Research shows they will often miss the joint. If the joint is missed... it is impossible for the treatment to work.

NYC Pain MD has spared no expense and used advanced imaging to guide the injections assuring the medicine gets into the joint. We frequently get results when this treatment was a failure done elsewhere.

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ISTOCK

Everything you need to know about this weekend's NYC Marathon

Route information, street closures, where to cheer on runners and more.

BECCA GLASSER-BAKER
Rebecca.Glasser@metro.us

Thousands of runners of all ages and abilities are expected to make the trek to participate in the epic 2019 NYC Marathon. Last year, the NYC Marathon saw over 52,000 people participate, and this year the number is expected to be even higher.

The marathon takes runners through all five boroughs of New York.

Here's everything you need to know about this year's race:

When is the 2019 NYC Marathon?
The 2019 NYC Marathon will be taking place, Sunday, Nov. 3, 2019. Although the race starts in waves, the earliest start time for the runners will be at 8:30 a.m. with the men's professional Wheelchair Division.

2019 NYC Marathon Route
The marathon starts at Fort Wadsworth, Staten Island and goes across all five boroughs. A detailed map of the route is shown above.

Where can I watch the 2019 NYC Marathon?
This year, the NYC Marathon created an app called the TCS NYC Marathon, where users can keep track of those running. It also provides a Reality Experience and more. You can also watch the race on television by tuning into WABC-TV, Channel 7 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. You can stream the race from ABC7NY.com from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. If you're out of the area, you can watch live coverage on ESPN2 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Where can I cheer on runners in the 2019 NYC Marathon?
Here are the best spots to cheer on runners, according to organizers:

-Brooklyn Stage, Fourth Avenue and Atlantic Avenue (Mile 8). Subways: B, D, N, Q, R, 2, 3, 4, 5

-Williamsburg and Greenpoint, Brooklyn (Miles 10-13): Claim sidewalk space along streets lined with shops and restaurants. Enjoy local treats as you watch runners and encourage them to keep their pace as they head toward the Pulaski Bridge to cross into Queens. Subways: G, L, M, J

-First Avenue, Manhattan (Miles 16-18): First Avenue is known for being packed with spectators who line the sidewalks and shout encouragement. The avenue's many bars and restaurants contribute to the festive atmosphere. Subways: Q, 4, 5, 6

-East Harlem (Miles 18-20): Also known as Spanish Harlem, this neighborhood is home to a vibrant Latino community and provides fantastic music on race day. This is a perfect location to cheer your heart out to help keep the motivation high. Subway: 6

-Fifth Avenue, East 90th Street - East 105th Street (Miles 23-24): This stretch of Fifth Avenue has the Guggenheim Museum, the Jewish Museum, the National Academy Museum, El Museo del Barrio and the Museum of the City of New York on the east and Central Park on the west. It's a cultural hub as well as a crucial spot to catch your runners before they enter Central Park. Subways: Q, 4, 5, 6, Q

-TCS Cheer Zone: Columbus Circle. Subways: A, C, B, D, 1

Go to metro.us for full information on street closures in all five boroughs.

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Ready, set, roar: Iconic NYPL lions back after $270K restoration

Patience and Fortitude have reclaimed their home.

MORGAN ROUSSEAU
morgan@metro.us

After nine weeks out of the public eye, the New York Public Libary's famed marble lions are back at their perch on Fifth Avenue, stoically welcoming visitors to NYC's 42nd Street Library.

The symblolic statues, named Patience and Fortitude, have guarded the 42nd Street Library since its opening in 1911. But time has taken its toll on the pair, which were crafted from porous Tennessee pink marble. Between the city's snow, rain, wind and traffic exhaust, the iconic statues require upkeep every seven to 10 years. An assessment determined that the 108-year-old lions needed a laser cleaning and repairs to several minor cracks and chips. The work lasted two months and included filling the cracks with grout and reinforcing any previous repairs.

The $270,000 project wrapped up Friday with the removal of all scaffolding.

"For over a century Patience and Fortitude have sat outside the Library, calmly assuring New Yorkers, scholars and visitors that truth and knowledge will always prevail, even in the darkest times," said New York Public Library President Anthony W. Marx. "It is our responsibility to be great stewards of our beloved, noble lions and ensure that they are in the best possible condition to inspire the public now and for generations to come. Thanks to this project, they are back to being the true kings of this city."

The repairs were funded by a grant from The New York Life Foundation (NYLF) and donations from hundreds of New Yorkers, according to a library spokesperson.

"We see our support as more than simply a restoration but rather a celebration of our nearly 80-year partnership and all that the library represents to visitors near and far," said Heather Nesle, president of the NYLF.

Some trivia about Patience & Fortitude

They were carved in the Bronx studios of the Piccirilli Brothers and named by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia during the Depression because he believed New Yorkers needed "patience and fortitude" to survive the tough times.

Lions are an international symbol of open access to knowledge and information.

They were last conserved in 2011; before that 2004.

The lions will begin wearing their annual holiday season wreaths later this month. The wreaths were made special for Patience and Fortitude; they include no metal and do not retain water to protect the marble.

About the library

The NYPL has 92 NYC locations — including research and branch libraries — throughout the Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island.

It offers free materials, computer access, classes, exhibitions, programming and more to everyone from toddlers to scholars.

It serves 18 million+ people annually, and millions more around the world who use its resources at www.nypl.org.

Learn more about how to support the Library at nypl.org/support

The 108-year-old lions need restoration every 7 to 10 years. NYPL

> **"We see our support as more than simply a restoration but rather a celebration of our nearly 80-year partnership and all that the library represents to visitors near and far."**
>
> **Heather Nesle, NYLF President**

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WhatsApp hacked to spy on top government officials at U.S. allies

The WhatsApp messaging application. REUTERS

Senior government officials in multiple U.S.-allied countries were targeted earlier this year with hacking software that used Facebook Inc's WhatsApp to take over users' phones, according to people familiar with the messaging company's investigation.

Sources familiar with WhatsApp's internal investigation into the breach said a "significant" portion of the known victims are high-profile government and military officials spread across at least 20 countries on five continents.

The hacking of a wider group of top government officials' smartphones than previously reported suggests the WhatsApp cyber intrusion could have broad political and diplomatic consequences.

WhatsApp filed a lawsuit on Tuesday against Israeli hacking tool developer NSO Group. The Facebook-owned software giant alleges that NSO Group built and sold a hacking platform that exploited a flaw in WhatsApp-owned servers to help clients hack into the cellphones of at least 1,400 users.

While it is not clear who used the software to hack officials' phones, NSO says it sells its spyware exclusively to government customers.

Some victims are in the United States, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Mexico, Pakistan and India, said people familiar with the investigation. Reuters could not verify whether victims from these countries included government officials.

The revelation comes as more than a dozen Indian journalists and human rights activists said on Thursday they were also targeted.

NSO did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Previously it has denied any wrongdoing, saying its products are only meant to help governments catch terrorists and criminals. REUTERS

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Ray Romano is finally on Martin Scorsese's radar

NETFLIX

The actor and comedian stars in the mob epic, "The Irishman."

JAMES CASE

The title to Ray Romano's decade-defining sitcom was rife to be a play on words. If there was a title for his initial professional contact with director Martin Scorsese it would be "Everybody Loves Raymond Except For Martin Scorsese Because He Literally Has No Idea Who He Is." In fact, he had first become aware of Romano during the process of directing and casting the pilot for "Vinyl" – the 1970's HBO music series that Scorsese created with Mick Jagger. Their team requested a tape from Romano.

"So, we sent it in and their response was [that] Marty likes what he saw," Romano said. "He's considering Ray. And he's never heard of Ray. No, not kidding. And we, my agent and I, were like - so he's never seen the show? She goes, 'No, he's actually never heard of it.'"

Such is the dividing line for one of the highest-paid and well-known sitcom actors of all time and one of the most well-regarded directors of all time. The awareness overlap wasn't even mutual.

"Marty doesn't watch TV," Romano said. "I was lucky when Marty hadn't seen anything that I had done. It was just fresh."

And further, many comedy-based performers see a difference between stand-up and performing as an "actor" as a barrier in both perception and career track.

"It wasn't like I started out saying stand-up is my passion. I found that, just knowing that I wanted to perform somehow. And I said, 'Oh, this is it.' And then I got the opportunity to act and now I want to do both," Romano said. "I had messed around in acting. But once I got into stand-up, that was my passion. And that's what I felt I did the best. And then 'Everybody Loves Raymond' came from that. David Letterman saw me on his show and signed me to a deal to develop a show and that's how 'Everybody Loves Raymond' came to be. So, I wasn't pursuing the acting. I always had a thought and a desire to do something with acting. But my goal is to be a great stand-up [comedian] and that's what I was doing when 'Everybody Loves Raymond' came. And then I was 'Everybody Loves Raymond' for nine years. But I always had this desire and a part of my dream wasn't to be a sitcom actor."

In "The Irishman," Romano gets that chance. His portrayal of legendary teamster union lawyer Bill Bufalino supports the integrity of the whole structure and Romano nails his part. Bufalino worked closely with Jimmy Hoffa and overlapped regularly with the other principals of the mob crime epic. "Bufalino was not like, this intimidating criminal presence. The big impression isn't that he wasn't one of those guys, but he was still in that world," Romano said.

The central character, Frank Sheeran, the titular "Irishman," is gradually pulled into a criminal circle, sometimes of his own accord and sometimes by how the world makes its accords for you. The consequences of his and the group's decisions become weightier as time passes and the reality of this and their world envelop around him. Scorsese said that he views Sheeran, at his core, as a good person.

"If you took that same man and his same soul and started his life in a different way, I can see what he means that there's a core of a person there, and his path took him into this world. And he did some horrible things. But, I think with this movie, Marty was showing how it's not as black and white as people think. And that's what's unique about the movie," Romano said.

"There's an emotional core that's similar, no matter where you are in life, you could be in this criminal world, or outside and we all feel the same things. Unless you're a sociopath."

"The Irishman" will be in select theatres Nov. 1 and will stream on Netflix starting Nov. 27.

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Comedian Vir Das on his biggest NYC show to date

The Indian comedian will be playing The Town Hall as a part of the NY Comedy Festival. **PAT KING**

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK COMEDY FESTIVAL

Vir Das is almost ready to take in New York and all of its charms. The Indian comedian will be performing his biggest show in the city to date with a headlining performance at The Town Hall for this year's New York Comedy Festival on Friday, Nov. 8. After touring the globe and releasing a Netflix special ("Abroad Understanding") as well as getting a role in the short-lived ABC comedy, "Whiskey Cavalier," Das should feel assured about playing such a big and distinguished venue. But when I spoke with him over the phone, the performer seemed a little nervous seeing the date on his calendar.

"I've never done Town Hall," says Das. "It might be the most, you know, one of the most prestigious venues that I've ever done. So I'm decidedly nervous about it. I'm comforted by the fact that there's a heavy Indian population in New York. And then New Jersey is right nearby. So I think I'm gonna be okay. You know, and last year I was in an American TV show, so that kind of changed the ratio of people coming. And I did a tour in America recently where I was able to do, you know, rooms like The Wilbur and sort of big comedy rooms as well and over the last 2 years it's been refreshing to kind of see a 50/50 split of Indian audiences and have 50% American audiences and introduce them to my sort of an authentic Indian perspective."

You are performing at The Town Hall for the New York Comedy Festival this year. Do you have any history with this festival?

I do! I kind of made my New York debut at Carolines. I think that was two years ago. And then after that, they booked me for the festival, I think it was two years ago or maybe last year. And booked me in the Kennedy Center, which none of us knew if that venue would fill up or not. I also shot my Netflix special partly in New York, my first Netflix special. So, it's kind of nice to come back and do Town Hall. It's nerve-wracking and I'm hoping people show up. Otherwise, I have braved a very long immigration line at JFK for nothing. So, I'm hoping they show up!

In your mind, what is more nerve-wracking: taping a comedy special or playing a big venue like Town Hall?

I think that this thing is much more nerve-wracking, you know what I mean? Because by the time you tape the special, the material is allegedly the best that it's ever going to be. And that tells you that's your final shot. But I'm coming into New York Comedy Festival with a new show, and the show is called "Loved" and it's all about a comedian questioning whether he's good at love or not and insights alone. So in that sense, it's pretty universal with you. It feels lighthearted and the stakes are just how much fun you can make this evening. Not is the lighting in the camera working well. So, definitely just coming in and doing a large show, you get to play and mix and be organic. That's always better.

So what is the answer to that question? Is a comedian good at love?

Well, no, not at all. We wouldn't be comedians, would we? But it's kind of spoiling [the] point of the show, was just me kind of sitting down and going, "Do comedians have the time nor the inclination or the mental capacity to practice real love?" And not just real romantic love. I mean, love for your parents. I mean love for your country, love for your dog, love for your best friend, love for family, love for grandparents, love for your wife. Because I'm this person who's kind of a hopeless romantic and I'm all about these bold gestures. But none of them have any sort of practical application in a new life. So to be a comic that comes into town for a few days, has one bold gesture, then leaves - can you classify that as love? And that's sort of the theme of the show. Because I feel like comedians, we either have time for no romance or a severe amount of very large, short-circuited, sporadic romance. And the real stuff has been faltered. The problem also delves into politics, you know, do you love your God, what kind of government do you love as well? But you know, love is the overarching theme.

NY Comedy Festival Presents Vir Das, The Town Hall, Nov. 8 at 7:00 p.m.

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Beer Garden Silent Disco Party
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Bohemian Beer Garden, 2919 24th Ave, Queens

Featured

NYC Craft Beer Festival - Halloweekend Harvest 2019 - Session 1
@ 6pm / $55-$85
Union West, 535 West 28th Street, New York

Featured

Harlem Jazz Series - Kali. Z. Fasteau
@ 7pm / $21.83
You name the instrument Kali Z. Fasteau plays it! November 1, 2019, she will be bringing her musical background and friends just for you! So grab a friend and make your way to the show! Greater Calvary Baptist Church, 55 West 124th Street, New York. 212-662-7779

Gazillion Bubble Show
@ 7pm
New World Stages - Stage 2, 340 West 50th Street, New York

Janice Messite Presents
@ 8pm
Broadway Comedy Club, 318 W. 53rd St, New York City

The Height of the Storm
@ 8pm
Samuel J. Friedman Theatre, 261 West 47th Street, New York

Live Dead
@ 8:30pm
Iridium Jazz Club, 1650 Broadway, New York

Sat 11/02

Featured

NY Tours For New Yorkers: Private Fall In Central Park History Tour
@ 1pm / $20
Meet at the benches next to Tavern on the Green, Central Park West and West 67th, Just inside the park about 100 yards from CPW, New York

Featured

NYC Craft Beer Festival - Halloweekend Harvest 2019 - Session 3
@ 6pm / $55-$85
Union West, 535 West 28th Street, New York

Sun 11/03

Featured

Drag Brunch Halloween Spooktacular: New York
@ 11:30am / $18
The Iridium, 1650 Broadway, New York City

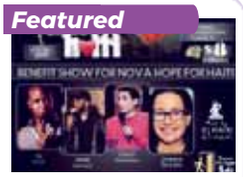
Editor's Pick

Sunday Funday: A Boozy Brooklyn Tasting Tour
@ 1:30pm / $64
Williamsburg Mini Mall, 218 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn

Editor's Pick

"That Physics Show"
@ 3pm / $32
The Playroom Theater, 151 W. 46th St., 8th Floor, New York

Featured



Jokes For Haiti
@ 8pm / $8
For the 4th year in a row, TJ invites some of his favorite comedians to help raise money to support Nova's work in Haiti. This year, he is joined by Daniel Simonsen, Janeane Garofalo and Jonas Jeannot Littlefield, 635 Sackett Street, Brooklyn. 516-301-7879

Mon 11/04

Leslie Odom, Jr.
@ 7pm
Bowery Ballroom, 6 Delancey St., New York

No Snitchin
@ 7pm
Broadway Comedy Club, 318 W. 53rd St, New York City

Janeane Garofalo, Jordan Rock, Graham Kay, No Two Drink Minimum - Excl
@ 8pm
EastVille Comedy Club - Brooklyn, 487 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn

Rock of Ages
@ 8pm
New World Stages - Stage 3, 340 West 50th Street, New York

The Raskins
@ 9:30pm
Mercury Lounge-NY, 217 East Houston St., New York

All Star Stand Up Comedy At Greenwich Village Comedy Club
@ 9:45pm
Greenwich Village Comedy Club, 99 MacDougal Street, New York

Tue 11/05

Risk USA 2019
@ 8am / $2000-$4499
Nov 5th - Nov 6th
Risk USA gives you the information you need to cope with a period of radical change in risk management and risk transfer markets. New York Marriott Marquis, 1535 Broadway, New York

Featured

Amazing Scavenger Hunt Adventure - New York-Midtown
@ 9am / $44
Times Square, 1501 Broadway, Manhattan

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Editor's Pick

Big Apple Circus
@ 12pm / $15-$125
Big Apple Circus at Lincoln Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, Damrosch Park, New York

Bella Bella
@ 7pm
New York City Center, 131 W. 55th St., New York

Featured

Kent Tritle & OSNY: Rachmaninoff & Duruflé, St. John the Divine, NYC- Nov 5
@ 7:30pm / $30-$60
Kent Tritle conducts the Oratorio Society of New York chorus and soloists in this intimate performance of moving works by Sergei Rachmaninoff and Duruflé at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, 1047 Amsterdam Ave, New York. 212-316-7540

FIAF Cinesalon - Golden Door
@ 7:30pm / $14
Florence Gould Hall at FIAF, 55 East 59th ST, New York

Celebrate Making Voices - Voting and Music with Bruce Sudano
@ 9pm
Coney Island Baby, 169 Avenue A, New York

Wed 11/06

10th Annual Diabetes Conference
@ 7:30am / $110-$139
Leonard's Palazzo, 555 Northern Boulevard, Great Neck

Mental Health First Aid Training - Bronx
@ 8:30am / Free
Bronx Neighborhood Health Action Center, 1826 Arthur Avenue, Multi-Purpose Room, 1st Floor, Bronx

Developer Experience Day with IBM Cloud
@ 9am / Free
105 Madison Ave, 105 Madison Avenue, New York

Gangster Mob Prohibition Pub Crawl
@ 10am / $44.40
115 Kenmare St, 115 Kenmare St, New York

Photography Portrait Workshop
@ 10am / $200-$350
Long Island City, Queens

Ultimate Food, History & Architecture Tour NYC
@ 10am / $44
Eataly NYC Flatiron, 200 5th Avenue, New York

Alms Round (Pindapata) in Union Square
@ 10am
Greenmarket, Union Square West, New York

Featured

Drink & Draw Wednesdays!
@ 7pm / $10
The Living Gallery, 1094 Broadway, Brooklyn

Thu 11/07

Featured

Fall 2019 Political Science Open House - CUNY Graduate Center
@ 6:30pm / Free
The Graduate Center - City University of New York, 365 5th Avenue, Room 5200, New York

Editor's Pick

NYC Karaoke Thursdays
@ 9pm / Free
Wicked Willy's, 149 Bleecker Street, New York

FOR METS, TIME FOR BRODIE, WILPONS TO PUT UP OR SHUT UP

PANTORNO'S PERCH

JOE PANTORNO
@JoePantorno

Mets GM Brodie Van Wagenen and COO Jeff Wilpon. GETTY IMAGES

Well, Brodie, they got you.

Not only that, but they won the whole darn thing.

The rehashing of New York Mets general manager Brodie Van Wagenen's brash preseason comments has become a tired tradition in 2019.

But it bears repeating once again.

Back in January, the former agent-turned-GM laid down the gauntlet when presenting his 2019 season hopes.

"I look forward to showing people that we're a team to be reckoned with," Van Wagenen said. "Let's not be shy on wanting to be the best and I fully expect us to be competitive, to be a winning team. Our goal is to win a championship and it starts with the division. So come get us."

Those comments were about a month after Van Wagenen pulled off his first big blockbuster as Mets GM, acquiring closer Edwin Diaz and Robinson Cano from the Seattle Mariners for promising prospect Jarred Kelenic, Justin Dunn, Jay Bruce, Anthony Swarzak and Gerson Bautista.

By now, we know how that deal played out.

Both Cano and Diaz had their worst seasons as pros while a second-straight Cy Young-worthy campaign from Jacob deGrom and a young, talented core featuring Pete Alonso, Jeff McNeil, Amed Rosario and J.D. Davis was derailed by an inept manager, a heinous bullpen and upper management that refused to spend to bolster the team's playoff push.

The Mets took an important step in righting the ship by firing Mickey Callaway after two losing seasons, but even this process can't be easy.

Van Wagenen, along with owners Jeff and Fred Wilpon, have dragged their feet hiring a new manager. So much so that their NL East rival, the Philadelphia Phillies, swooped in and nabbed Joe Girardi — considered a front-runner for the Mets job — despite the Mets having a week head start in the search process.

New York still doesn't have its manager with the drawn-out interview process having more rounds than the actual postseason.

The names in the running leave plenty to be desired, too. The Mets are reportedly down to Carlos Beltran, Tim Bogar, Derek Shelton and Eduardo Perez.

None of those names have legitimate MLB managing experience.

With the season over and the Washington Nationals taking their first-ever World Series title in a thrilling Fall Classic, an intriguing offseason loaded with big-name free agents takes center stage.

The Fall Classic alone featured two of the biggest names available on the market this winter as Astros ace Gerrit Cole and Nationals star third baseman Anthony Rendon will test the waters.

It prompted the New York Post's Joel Sherman to write a column imploring the Mets to heavily pursue both, stating that they can "stop the laughter" by landing either of those names.

While it's an admirable notion, I think what's more laughable is the idea that the Wilpons would be willing to drop $250 million-plus contracts on players — even if they enhance the Mets' standing in the NL East.

It would also ease the logjam within the roster.

Nabbing Rendon would make a player like Davis expendable. And his promising bat could be dealt for problem-solvers for other parts of the roster.

The same would go for Noah Syndergaard if the Mets were to get Cole.

Suddenly, the Mets would have two bonafide stars while possessing the assets needed to bolster the bullpen.

All that's left to be done then is get the right manager.

But the importance of this offseason for the Mets cannot be stressed enough.

They have a nice little team right now in an NL East division that now features the World Series champions, a reloading Phillies team with a proven, winning manager, and the young, explosive Atlanta Braves.

The ball is in the Wilpons' and Van Wagenen's court. Either you make an actual commitment to winning this winter, or you continue thinking with your bank account and finding puppets to create the illusion of contention.

Behold New York's next best championship hope: The Islanders?

While New York muddles through a championship drought, the Islanders look to be the best team currently playing.

JOE PANTORNO
joseph.pantorno@metro.us

GETTY IMAGES

New York sports is in a sorry state.

The Big Apple is in the midst of one of the longest championship droughts in its history with the Giants' Super Bowl XLVI triumph over the Patriots the last time a New York team across the four major sports leagues won a title.

That was seven years ago.

Just how rare is this kind of drought in New York?

The only time since 1900 that New York has been forced to wait longer for a championship was from 1906-1920 when World Series titles by the old New York Giants bookended the dry spell.

Most of the credit for New York's prosperity throughout the past century goes to the Yankees, who have won 27 World Series titles since 1923 — just in case one of your obnoxious Yankee-fan friends haven't reminded you lately.

But even the Yankees have had issues returning to the mountain top, which so many millennials have grown accustomed to throughout their childhood and adolescent years.

The Bronx Bombers haven't won or even appeared in a World Series since title No. 27 in 2009 over the Phillies. It made the 2010s the first decade since the 1910s that the Yankees didn't win an American League pennant. They came close for a second time in three years a few weeks ago, falling to the Astros in six games in the ALCS.

Next October is oh so far away now as Yankees fans grow more impatient. Can't you hear the screams for Brian Cashman to sign Gerrit Cole yet?

With the Yankees entering hibernation until spring, the rest of the New York sports scene doesn't instill much confidence.

Many believe the Wilpon family and Brodie Van Wagenen won't invest enough to make the Mets a legitimate World Series contender despite piecing together a promising core.

A convoluted managerial search hasn't helped.

The Jets are a dumpster fire at 1-6 with star safety Jamal Adams now at odds with general manager Joe Douglas following a dramatic trade deadline on Tuesday. It's just the latest embarrassment for a franchise that lost their franchise quarterback for a month with mono, released veteran offensive lineman Kelechi Osemele because he had shoulder surgery against his team's will and scoring just seven offensive touchdowns in seven games this season.

The Giants aren't in much better shape, sitting at 2-6, as general manager Dave Gettleman has refused to invest in an offensive line to protect his meal tickets in Daniel Jones and Saquon Barkley.

In the NBA, the Nets are off to a slow start at the commencement of the Kyrie Irving era. Without Kevin Durant for the 2019-20 season, expectations are certainly limited for the franchise that has clawed its way out of the depths of the NBA's basement.

As for the Knicks, well, they're still the Knicks.

Their co-tenants, the Rangers, are in the middle of a rebuild with future success reliant on second-year head coach David Quinn's ability to develop numerous young players.

Early returns have been mixed, to say the least.

Across the river, the New Jersey Devils (who have quite a following in New York) are already facing the prospect of firing their head coach after blowing countless leads through the 2019-20 season's first 10 games.

Combine the Giants, Jets, Knicks, Nets, Rangers and Devils win totals so far this season and you have nine.

That's it.

Do you know who has eight wins this year who almost everyone (including the New York media) likes to forget?

The Islanders.

Remarkably enough, the Islanders are probably the second-most competent team in New York right now — a concept unheard of five years ago when ex-GM Garth Snow was running the show.

But owner Jon Ledecky's hiring of Lou Lamoriello as GM and the subsequent acquisition of head coach Barry Trotz has changed the culture on Long Island (and Brooklyn, depending on where their home games are played).

The Islanders went from a two-decades-long joke in the NHL to a 103-point team last season that made the Eastern Conference semifinals.

This season, after being written off by almost everyone once again, they own an NHL-best seven-game win streak thanks to a culture that stresses defense and team, not the individual.

Still, the team is considered an afterthought.

NHL pundits continue to wait for the "unsustainable" style of play — which absorbs as much opposing pressure as possible before hitting them on the counter — will give out.

New York media simply doesn't pay attention because they don't provide the same amount of clout as the Rangers. It's understandable, considering the Rangers are an Original 6 brand that plays in the world's most famous arena.

But the fact of the matter is that the Islanders certainly seem to be in a better position to make a championship run compared to the Rangers — or anyone else until next fall, at least for now.

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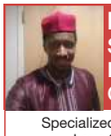

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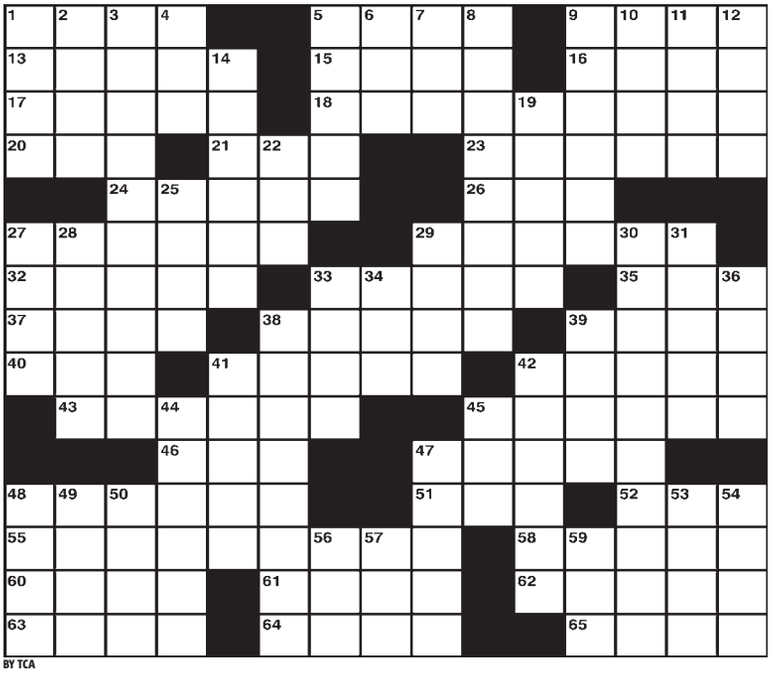
15 Crucial
16 Corridor
17 More than sufficient
18 Armor-covered animal
20 Compadre
21 Use a shovel
23 Most miffed
24 Gladden
26 Ashley, to Mary-Kate
27 Characteristics
29 Steamboat developer Robert __
32 Theater walkway
33 As __ as an ape
35 Nickname for Margaret
37 Kill
38 Sudden increase
39 Bridge
40 Barbie's beau
41 Looks for
42 Baseball's Yogi
43 Sandal features
45 Take into custody
46 "Any port __ storm"
47 Black suit
48 Razor user
51 Clobber
52 Fluid-filled pouch
55 Bearable
58 Mexican friend
60 Remove from office
61 Keep __ on; watch closely
62 Tier
63 Experts
64 Compass point
65 Reason to study

DOWN

1 Trade
2 Peru's capital
3 Disagreeable
4 Become firm
5 Old saying
6 Evergreen tree
7 Upper limb
8 Console; encourage
9 Need for water
10 Healthy
11 Misfortunes
12 __ machines; casino lures
14 Put to sleep before surgery
19 Tiny decorative mat
22 Common contraction
25 Easter flower
27 Chore
28 Vexes
29 Desert fruits
30 Tyrannical
31 Gets closer to
33 Colors
34 Flood refuge
36 Small fly
38 Go __ ways; split up
39 Belgrade native
41 More rational
42 Cruel; savage
44 Headed bolts
45 Actress Larter
47 Bosom
48 Word in a red octagon
49 Period of time
50 Additionally
53 Grows older
54 Barn youngster
56 Sheep's cry
57 Scale divisions: abbr.
59 Was introduced to



BY TCA

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horoscopes

Aries Make adjustments that will take the pressure off of you. Look at your options and consider the best way to go about improving your life.

Taurus Make a move. Trust and believe in what you can offer and accomplish. Get together with people you work well with to finalize plans.

Gemini Put more time and effort into personal changes that will make you look and feel your best. Address health issues and put a diet and exercise plan in play.

Cancer If something is bothering you, discuss it and eliminate the problem. Being open and honest about your feelings will bring you closer to your personal goals.

Leo Personal improvement should be your focus. You cannot please everyone, but you can be responsible for your own happiness.

Virgo Let go of whatever isn't working for you and surround yourself with what's important. Join forces with someone who shares your interests, concerns and beliefs.

Libra Think outside the box when it comes to new beginnings. You have to let go of the past to move forward. Cut out what is no longer working for you.

Scorpio Evaluate your current position and consider the changes you'd like to make. You have more control over what happens next than you realize.

Sagittarius Take care of business before you socialize. Protect yourself against negative publicity by not sharing information that is personal or that could easily be used against you.

Capricorn Use your charm and diplomacy if someone tries to stir up trouble. A calm and controlled attitude will put you in the driver's seat and out of harm's way.

Aquarius A change to the ways in which you handle people and personal matters will help you avoid complaints or criticism. Don't get into a conversation with someone too rigid to meet you halfway.

Pisces Set off on a new adventure. Travel and educational pursuits are favored, and spending more time with a loved one will bring you closer together.

EUGENIA LAST

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	3			6			1	
		8			4			5
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			6		3	2		
	6	3				1	8	

Yesterday's Answers

M	D	S			A	L	E	C	S		A	R	M	S
A	R	T	S		H	A	G	U	E		S	O	A	K
T	O	I	L		O	R	A	T	E		S	A	R	I
	P	R	O	T	R	U	D	E	D		I	R	K	S
			W	I	S	E			L	O	S			
S	C	H	E	M	E		T	W	I	L	I	G	H	T
T	H	O	S	E		G	R	I	N	D		A	I	R
R	I	O	T		S	U	I	N	G		J	U	D	E
A	N	D		T	I	L	T	S		P	A	G	E	S
P	A	S	S	A	B	L	E		R	E	C	E	S	S
			A	I	L			L	A	N	K			
W	O	R	D		I	M	P	O	R	T	A	N	T	
A	M	I	D		N	O	I	S	E		L	O	A	M
T	A	L	L		G	A	T	E	S		S	A	K	E
T	R	E	E		S	T	A	R	T			H	E	N

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